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## THE EXPERIENCE OF OLYMPIC EDUCATION FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

**Abstract.** The article explores new approaches to professional training in sports education, focusing on integrating physical education and sports specialists into the global system. It highlights the promotion of the ideals and values of Olympic teaching in response to the growing interest in the international athletic movement and the Games in the context of modern global society.

The study is based on research materials evaluating the professional literacy level of specialists in physical education regarding the global sporting event, including its history, current state, and the impact of new knowledge on the professional preparation of future specialists. This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining a survey of 225 students with an experimental intervention involving an “Olympic Education” course. Findings showed that students in the experimental group significantly improved their Olympic literacy compared to the control group, confirming the effectiveness of the intervention.

The main aim of the article is to cultivate and enhance the culture of Olympism among youth by introducing them to the ideals and values of competitive sports through educational programs. Additionally, the article presents the experience of implementing Olympism concepts at the M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University. Recommendations for improving students' literacy in sports-related knowledge at higher educational institutions are also provided.

**Keywords:** olympic education, physical education and sports specialists, Olympic Games, olympism, students, olympic movement.

### Introduction

The pinnacle of sports – the Olympic Games – is a grand competition watched by the entire world, where thousands of athletes from all corners of the globe strive to conquer this height. Over the 30 years of Kazakhstan's independence, we have witnessed significant achievements by our athletes. At the Olympic Games and global competitions, our national flag has waved numerous times, our anthem has been played, and our spirit has soared higher.

The relevance of introducing Olympic education stems from the contradiction between the high level of sports development achieved at the Olympic Games over the past several decades and the low level of implementation of Olympic ideals and values among youth in the educational process. The current youth's theoretical knowledge of the Olympic Games, the development history of the modern Olympic movement, and the value of Olympism in the Republic of Kazakhstan is insufficient. Therefore, studying the issue of implementing Olympic education in Kazakhstan requires a comprehensive approach. The achievements of Olympic athletes hold great social, educational, and moral significance.

The Olympic movement has long been recognized as a global platform that transcends sports, influencing social and cultural development. Scholars have examined the educational impact of Olympism and emphasized the importance of integrating its values into the educational curriculum (Bakhtiyarova, S., Ali, Z., Nurbagi, S., Baitlessova, N., & Yergaliyev,

A., 2021). The Olympic Charter outlines the primary objectives of Olympic education, which include fostering a spirit of friendship, fair play, and mutual respect (Olympic Charter, 2020).

The relevance of Olympic education in Kazakhstan stems from the growing recognition of the need to instill Olympic values among youth. Research findings highlight the significant role of Olympic education in fostering students' understanding of both the historical evolution and contemporary dynamics of the Olympic movement, thus enhancing their overall professional competence (Bulatova, Maria & Platonov, Vladimir, 2018, Theodorakis, Y., Georgiadis, K., & Hassandra, M., 2024). Moreover, the inclusion of Olympic education within the curriculum of higher education institutions has been shown to positively influence students' motivation toward participating in physical activities and competitive sports (Hakman, Anna & Galan, Yaroslav & Koshura, Andrew & Beshlei, Olga., 2021).

Currently, the effective widespread application of Olympic education is only possible when there are highly qualified professionals in the pedagogical field who possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and expertise to introduce individuals to the ideals and values of the Olympics, an area where Kazakhstan is still lacking. In this regard, it is essential to find effective ways to implement Olympic education and enhance literacy in this field for future physical education and sports specialists in Kazakhstan's higher educational institutions.

The issues of Olympic education have drawn the attention of many domestic and foreign scholars and practitioners (Bakhtiyarova, S., Kuderiyev, Z., Murzakhmetov, Y. [et al.], 2020). These topics are discussed at international sports congresses, scientific conferences, seminars, and research works. In Kazakhstan, the Kazakh Academy of Sports and Tourism regularly hosts International Scientific Congresses on "Olympic Sports and Sports for All," which are attended by scientists from many countries.

In historical data on Olympic education, the general sports movement, and Kazakhstan's role within it are presented. The author highlighted the need to revive scientific research on Olympic education and culture in Kazakhstan, specifically in the historical Olympic theme (Doskaraev, B.M., 2019).

V. Stolyarov (Stolyarov, V., 2019) drawing on extensive professional experience, developed and implemented his own conceptual framework for Olympic education. In his work, he critically analyzed the fundamental problems and common misconceptions observed in the theoretical and practical dimensions of pedagogical activity within Olympic education. He identified three core directions where significant misinterpretations tend to occur:

Olympic education is frequently interpreted too broadly, often being equated with any pedagogical initiative related to physical education and sports. This includes programs aimed at health promotion, physical development, fitness enhancement, and teaching sports techniques.

Another issue arises from a limited perspective on pedagogical efforts, where Olympic education is confined to familiarizing youth with the competitive aspects of sport. This narrow focus reduces Olympic education to the transmission of factual knowledge about the Olympic movement and Olympism, without deeper engagement.

A prevailing emphasis is placed on transferring knowledge about the historical background and current state of the sports movement. Although such information is valuable, Olympic education must also convey the core mission and values of Olympism, the philosophical ideas of Pierre de Coubertin, their relevance in modern contexts, and the strategies needed to sustain and promote these ideals. This also involves fostering an understanding of the humanistic essence of international sport and combating its negative manifestations.

Soldatenkov et al. (Soldatenkov, F.N., Abramov, R.V., Krestyannikov, A.S., & Chugaevskiy, E.V., 2019) studied the potential of using Olympic education as a tool for promoting physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle. They explored various forms of working

with children, such as activities in the form of Olympic expert's observations. After a series of events based on Olympic education tools, the results demonstrated a positive impact on children's enthusiasm for a healthy lifestyle.

Ovchinnikov et al. (Ovchinnikov, A.Y., & Efremenkova, K.N., 2015) conducted a comprehensive study on the use of multimedia technologies in Olympic education for students at higher educational institutions in the field of physical education. The author developed an advanced model of Olympic education for preparing physical education undergraduates, incorporating multimedia technologies. The research confirmed that this model could be applied in the educational process of higher professional institutions across various fields of study.

In recent times, German researchers have been actively engaged in exploring various dimensions of Olympic education, focusing on its conceptual foundations, thematic scope, and the diverse approaches used in its pedagogical application. According to Rychtecky (Rychtecky, A., 2017), there is a noticeable rise in attention toward the practical outcomes of Olympic education in Germany, supported by in-depth evaluations conducted by the country's leading specialists.

Fioranzi et al. (Fioranzi, A, Florio, G., 2014) outlined two distinct approaches to the advancement of Olympic education in general education schools in New Zealand. The first approach involves presenting the history and current state of the Olympic Games in conjunction with content that may not correspond to factual information, numerical data, or the academic goals outlined in school curricula. The second approach views Olympic ideals and values as integral to shaping students' life principles through physical education and sport.

While Kazakhstani scholars have emphasized historical and cultural aspects of Olympism, international literature increasingly addresses technological innovations and cross-cultural pedagogical models. This contrast reveals the need for Kazakhstan to integrate global best practices into local educational strategies.

### **General provisions**

A healthy lifestyle is the main element of modern man's culture. In our modern world, such tasks of physical education of young people as strengthening and preserving health, forming healthy lifestyle skills are relevant. The effectiveness of solving these tasks directly depends on the degree of development of each person's personal attitude to their health. Understanding and awareness of the phenomena of health and a healthy lifestyle form the foundation on which human behavior should be built. A healthy lifestyle of a student is determined by the value orientations, worldview, moral and social experience. Self-confidence, well-being, strong-willed stability - all these are signs of a student's psychological health.

### **Materials and Methods**

#### *Research Design*

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to assess the implementation of Olympic education in university settings. The research was structured in two main phases: (1) a survey-based assessment of students' knowledge of Olympic education and (2) an experimental intervention involving the introduction of an Olympic education course.

#### *Participants*

The study involved 225 third-year students enrolled in Physical Education and Sports programs across three higher education institutions in Kazakhstan: K. Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University (ARU) (n = 73); Kh. Dosmukhamedov Atyrau University (AU) (n = 75); M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University (WKU) (n = 77). Participants were selected based

on their enrollment in physical education programs, ensuring that the study targeted future specialists in the field.

#### *Data Collection Methods*

A structured questionnaire was developed to assess students' knowledge of Olympic history, values, and Kazakhstan's role in the Olympic movement. The survey included multiple-choice and open-ended questions covering three thematic blocks: Ancient Olympic Games, the modern Olympic movement, Kazakhstan's participation in the Olympics. Data were collected through an online survey platform and in-person sessions at participating universities.

#### *Experimental Study*

Two groups were formed at M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University: Experimental Group (n = 30): Received an intensive Olympic education intervention. Control Group (n = 30): Followed the standard university curriculum without additional Olympic education components.

The intervention consisted of: 15-hour theoretical course on Olympic values and history; 15 hours of interactive learning, including quizzes and role-playing games; 15 hours of guided independent work, such as Olympic crosswords and research assignments; 45 hours of self-study, including literature review and group discussions.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. The study adhered to university guidelines on research ethics, ensuring participant confidentiality and voluntary participation. Data were anonymized and securely stored to prevent unauthorized access. The study was conducted in three universities, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions.

The intervention was limited to one semester; long-term impacts of Olympic education require further study.

This methodological approach ensured a comprehensive assessment of Olympic education literacy among future sports professionals while testing an innovative educational intervention to enhance their knowledge and engagement with Olympic values.

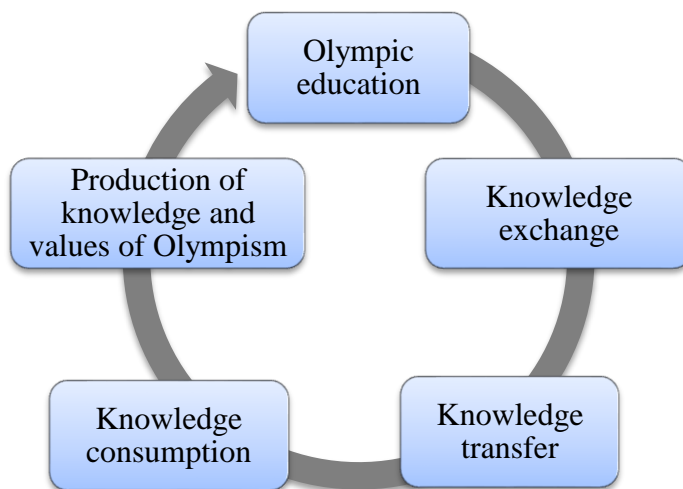
The necessity of enhancing and renewing Olympic education within pedagogical practice is affirmed by the primary guiding document of the global sports movement—the Olympic Charter—as well as by the strategic objectives outlined by both International and National Olympic Committees. These sources underline the importance of supporting young people in Kazakhstan by facilitating access to sports education related to the Olympic Games, fostering the fundamental principles of Olympism, and integrating these values into the content of physical education programs in schools and higher education institutions.

Olympic education, as a systemic component, is realized through a pedagogical process that is humanistically structured. This process is designed to create meaningful opportunities for the youth and general population to internalize knowledge about Olympic values and ideals. The focus is on guiding individuals toward transforming their personal behavior into positive motivational drivers that promote and sustain a humanistic way of life.

The process of implementing Olympic education, as shown in Figure 1, can be represented in the form of the following stages.

**Figure 1.**

*Stages of the implementation of Olympic education*



In this regard, the need to educate children and adolescents through Olympic education tools and methods has become especially relevant due to the intensification of issues related to the humanization of life on Earth in the 21st century.

Olympic education is closely connected to stages such as knowledge exchange, knowledge transfer, knowledge consumption, and the dissemination of knowledge and Olympic values.

As a result, Olympic education has increasingly become the subject of active scientific research, as the necessity of developing the Olympic movement for the humanization of society has been recognized internationally. This highlights the need to seek new, unconventional educational sources that promote universal moral and spiritual values.

### **Research results**

To prove the hypothesis that the presence of Olympic knowledge in physical education and sports specialists directly affects their ability to implement Olympic literacy in pedagogical practice, we conducted a survey aimed at determining the level of literacy called "The Formation Level of the Olympic Knowledge System" among students majoring in Physical education and sports.

A total of 225 students from the 3rd year of physical education and sports programs participated in the survey. Among them, 73 students were from the K. Zhubanov Aktobe Regional University (ARU), 75 students from the Kh. Dosmukhamedov Atyrau University (AU), and 77 students from M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University (WKU).

Table 1 presents the results of correct responses in determining the formation of Olympic knowledge literacy among students majoring in Physical education and sports.

**Table 1.**

*Formation of the literacy of Olympic education of students of the specialty Physical Culture and sports, %*

№	Questions	Name of higher education institutions		
		WKU, n=77	AU, n=75	ARU, n=73
1	Show the first Olympic champion of independent Kazakhstan	62,9	62,67	65,8
2	Mark in what sports Zh. Ushkempirov, Sh. Serikov became champions of the Olympic Games	95,7	86,67	86,3
3	Mark from what year Kazakhstan began to participate in the Summer Olympics as an independent state	46,6	46,67	57,7
4	Specify in which Olympic Games B. Sattarkhanov, E. Ibraimov, and O. Shishigina became champions	85,2	74, 6	86,3
5	Mark the first boxing champion of independent Kazakhstan to win the Val Barker Cup	45,2	62, 6	63
6	Show the first athlete of Kazakhstan to win a gold medal in swimming	87,8	96	91,8

Based on the analysis of the survey results, the need for specialized education in the field of Olympic education was identified. This is because only 70% of the students were able to correctly answer even the easiest questions, which they should have known. The total number of incorrect answers was 30%. In this regard, it can be concluded that future physical education and sports specialists do not possess sufficient knowledge in the issues of the Olympic movement and the meaning of sports and the Olympics. The reasons for this result can primarily be attributed to the insufficient information provided about the history and current state of the Olympic movement in the subjects taught at higher educational institutions specializing in physical education and sports.

Findings from the survey conducted among students specializing in physical education and sports, along with coaches from various disciplines, physical education instructors, and sports administrators, indicate that although young people show growing enthusiasm toward sports and the Olympic Games, their understanding of the ideals, values, and traditions of Olympism remains limited. This highlights the pressing need and relevance of implementing Olympic education to strengthen the Olympic movement and contribute to the broader advancement of society..

During the experiment, two groups were formed from third-year students of the Physical Education and Sports department of M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan University: a control group (30 students) and an experimental group (30 students).

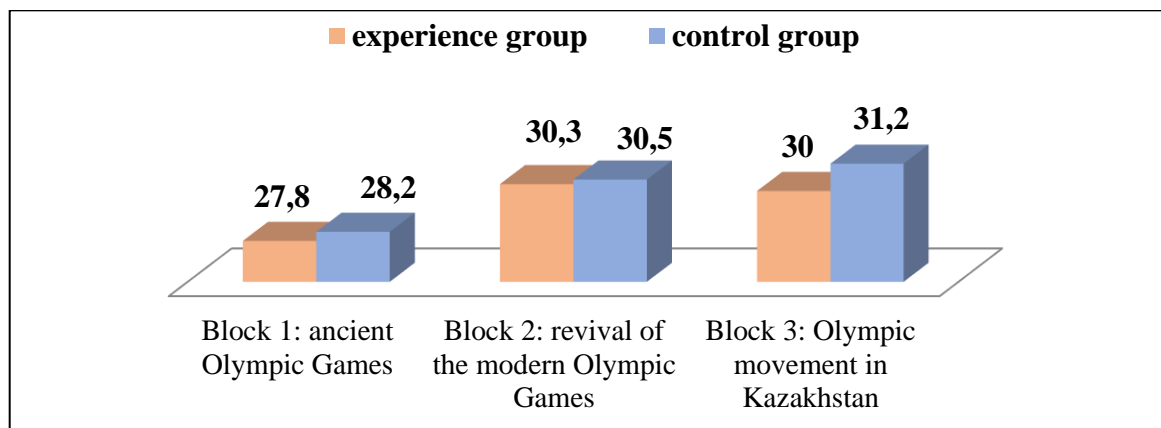
To prove the statement that a high level of Olympic education in physical education and sports specialists is a prerequisite for developing their Olympic literacy, we conducted an "Olympic Literacy" test for physical education and sports majors.

Prior to initiating the experiment, a diagnostic tool titled the "Olympic Literacy" test was created and administered to evaluate students' understanding of the Olympic movement. The test was structured into three thematic sections: the first section addressed topics concerning the Ancient Olympic Games, the second explored the restoration of the Modern Olympic Games, and the third examined the progression of the Olympic movement in Kazakhstan. Each section comprised 30 questions, making a total of 90 questions, all aimed at assessing the students' level of Olympic literacy.

Figure 2 shows the comparative results of physical education and sports major students' "Olympic Literacy" test before the experiment.

**Figure 2.**

*Comparative pre-test results of students' Olympic literacy (points represent correct responses in three thematic blocks of the literacy test).*



In this regard, the results of the test aimed at determining the Olympic education literacy of physical education and sports major students indicate that the formation of their Olympic literacy requires a formative experiment.

In light of this, we will elaborate on the content and methodology of the elective course we developed, which is aimed at forming Olympic education literacy in physical education and sports specialists.

The experimental group studied according to the author's methodology, which we designed to improve Olympic education, while the control group followed the generally accepted methodology in higher education institutions. The content of the author's methodology included: a 15-hour theoretical course covering the theoretical base of Olympic education; 15 hours of intellectual games such as "Olympic Cell," "Olympic Primer," and "Olympic Lessons;" 15 hours of independent work under the guidance of the instructor (IWS), during which Olympic crosswords were solved and Olympic quizzes were held; 45 hours of student's independent work (SIW), where tasks on Olympic terminology were checked, round tables and role-playing games were organized.

## Discussion

The primary objective of the "Olympic Education" course is to provide students with a solid foundation of knowledge about Olympism, the Olympic movement, and the Olympic Games, enabling them to integrate these concepts into their future professional teaching practices. As future educators, students will work toward developing a level of understanding that supports the enhancement of public perception regarding Olympism and the Olympic movement, while also facilitating the spread of its humanistic values within society. This educational approach aims to cultivate virtuous character traits among young people, inspire a commitment to balanced physical development, and promote both physical fitness and spiritual growth.

The objectives of the course are as follows:

- To establish solid and deep knowledge among students about the Olympic Games, the Olympic movement, their history, the goals, objectives, ideals, and values of Olympism, general humanism, and the humanistic potential of sport.
- To equip students with the knowledge that will help foster children's and youth's interest in sports and physical activities, their enthusiasm for the Olympic Games and the Olympic movement, and their aspiration to implement humanistic values through sport in their future professional practices.

As outlined in the course syllabus for "Olympic Education," we structured the content into 3 modules. The first module is titled "The Origin of the Olympic Games in Ancient Greece," the second module is "The Revival of the Modern Olympic Games and the Olympic Movement in Kazakhstan," and the third module is "Spreading Olympic Education to Children and Youth (Preschool, School, and Higher Education)."

Based on this, during seminar classes, we developed the intellectual game "Olympic Cell" as a teaching method. Well-organized intellectual games help create a conducive emotional atmosphere for learning and establish psychological connections between all participants. In the game setting, students' intellectual efforts are engaged. The types of group work help students develop communication skills and also foster teamwork, mutual understanding, and the ability to recognize the value of each team member, which are skills that require time to cultivate.

In the "Olympic Cell" intellectual game, the student begins by selecting one of the cells displayed on the game slide with the "Olympic Topics" and a point value. The questions are designed so that each corresponds to a specific topic of the game. Five topics are offered for the game. The point values range from 10 to 50. The higher the point value, the more difficult the question.

The game continues until all the questions have been played. The game is organized in the following ways:

- Head-to-head game (between students)
- Team game (students are divided into two teams). If one team gives an incorrect answer, the other team gets the opportunity to respond. The team with the most points is considered the winner.

**Figure 3.**

*Example screenshot of the interactive game "Olympic Cell," showing how point values correspond to question difficulty.*

OLYMPIAD TOPICS					
NAMES	10	20	30	40	50
CITY AND COUNTRY	10	20	30	40	50
TYPES OF SPORTS	10	20	30	40	50
OLYMPIANS	10	20	30	40	50
OLYMPIC SQUARE	10	20	30	40	50

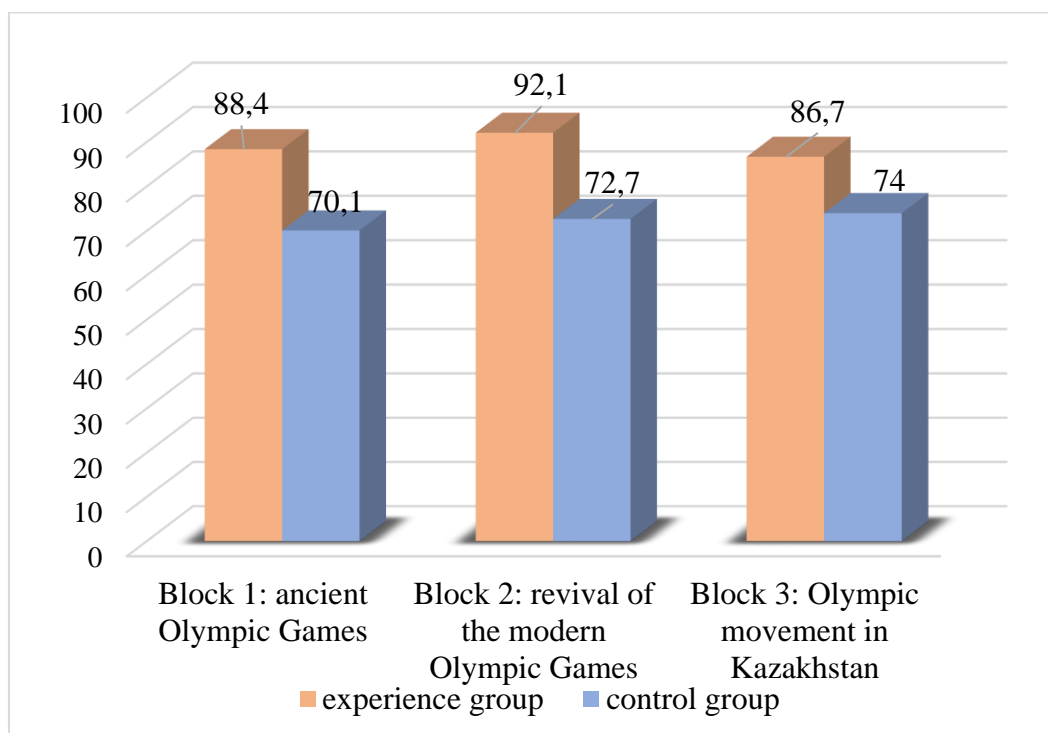


Thus, in order to equip students with the necessary competencies, we implemented a number of active and interactive methods, along with business games conducted during practical classes.

This is illustrated in Figure 4, which demonstrates how the methodology for improving Olympic education influences the enhancement of Olympic knowledge in training specialists in physical education and sports. This is achieved by including the elective course "Olympic Education" in the curriculum.

**Figure 4.**

*Post-test comparison of control vs. experimental groups; points indicate mean scores out of 90 questions.*



Our intervention aligns with findings from Germany, where structured Olympic education programs enhanced students' understanding of Olympism (Rychtecky, 2017), and from New Zealand, where values-based approaches improved student engagement (Fioranzi & Florio, 2014). This suggests that the Kazakhstani case adds valuable evidence from Central Asia to the global discussion on Olympic literacy in higher education.

Summarizing the results of the "Olympic Literacy" test, it can be concluded that mastering the elective course "Olympic Education" significantly improved the knowledge volume and quality in the experimental group compared to the control group. This provides solid grounds to affirm its positive impact on the level of literacy and knowledge in the field of the Olympic movement.

### Conclusions

Currently, it can be stated that organizing a unified, multi-level system of Olympic literacy in the training of physical education and sports specialists is a justified approach. Thus, the development of Olympic literacy is structurally feasible and has the potential to encompass

all educational institutions in Kazakhstan. Furthermore, the use of Olympic education tools provides a tangible opportunity to educate and nurture the younger generation in the spirit of true Olympic values — respect, friendship, and the pursuit of excellence.

At present, it is possible to create a unified system of Olympic education for future physical education and sports specialists by enhancing Olympic education and continuing its practical implementation at the preschool, general, and higher education levels. Thus, if a practice based on the three main stages of education is established in our country, it should be emphasized that this will lead to an increase in the Olympic literacy of the younger generation and the formation of a unified system of Olympic education.

To enhance the Olympic literacy of future physical education and sports specialists, we have proposed the following recommendations:

1. The subject "Olympic Education", which serves as a key component in providing a fundamental understanding of Olympism, should be included in the curriculum of the "Physical Education and Sports" educational program as part of the basic or specialized disciplines cycle.

2. Active and interactive teaching methods should be employed within the framework of the "Olympic Education" course. These include Olympic literacy testing, Olympic crossword puzzles, Olympic quizzes, Olympic dictionaries, Olympic lessons, masterclasses with specialists in the field of the Olympic movement, as well as role-playing and intellectual games (e.g., "Olympic Alphabet," "Olympic Cell"). These methods contribute to the successful development of a systematic knowledge base for students specializing in physical education and sports.

3. To enhance the Olympic literacy of future physical education and sports specialists, it is essential to provide electronic textbooks on the topic of the Olympic Games, sports-related films, audio materials, and computer-based tools. Additionally, it is necessary to intensify scientific research and project work on issues related to Olympic education. A dedicated section on Olympic topics should also be included in the "Theory and Methods of Physical Education" scientific-theoretical journal.

Currently, the implementation of a comprehensive, multi-tiered Olympic education system in the preparation of future professionals in physical education and sports is seen as a well-founded and effective strategy. From a structural perspective, establishing such a system is both achievable and capable of being integrated across all levels of educational institutions in Kazakhstan. In addition, incorporating Olympic education methodologies offers a tangible means to instill core Olympic principles such as respect, friendship, and striving for excellence into the upbringing of younger generations.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

### **Author Contributions**

Bakhtiyarova Sayagul: Conceptualization, Methodology; Kenzhin Zhaxat: Data curation, Writing- Original draft preparation; Kassenov Khanat: Visualization, Investigation; Khanat Kassenov: Supervision; Khazhgaliyeva Gulnar: Validation; Turginbayeva Aitolkyn: Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

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